Police Spying Report Called 'Unresponsive'

By LaBarbara Bowman
Washington Post Staff Writer

Eleven District City Council members yesterday called a report last month by the city's police chief on police intelligence gathering on political activists and organizations "evasive and unresponsive," and requested a second report.

"We believe that evasion, nonresponsiveness and obfuscation are inappropriate," the members said in a letter to Mayor Walter E. Washington. "The chief of police should accept the fact that he and the department are accountable and should answer our concerns and questions with the utmost detail and clarity."

The letter was initiated by Council member Julius Hobson, who asked for the first report on the police collection of thousands of unevaluated files on political activists and organizations during the urban riots and antiwar demonstrations of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The letter was signed by all Council members except Willie J. Hardy chairman of the Council's committee on the police department, and William Spaulding.

A spokesman for the mayor said Washington had sent the letter to Police Chief Maurice J. Cullinane for his comments. The members asked for answers to a series of questions by April 15, the date on which the body will make its first reading of the mayor's proposed budget.

The letter noted that the report did not give "a single concrete instance of the benefits" of the intelligence campaign, and did not explain why a disproportionate amount of money apparently was spent on investigating political organizations instead of organized crime.

Hobson alone wrote to U.S. Attorney Earl J. Silbert asking him to investigate statements made by Insp. Albert W. Ferguson in an interview with The Washington Post to determine whether "any criminal laws were violated."

In that story, Ferguson, who headed the police intelligence unit in 1973 was quoted as saying a high ranking police official once proposed,—and was turned down—that the police burn a float of the radical Yippie organization to thwart its demonstration plans against the 1973 inaugural parade of former President Nixon